



WAPSD

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

**2013-2014 Annual Report
Wyoming Advisory Panel
For Students with Disabilities**

**Cindy Hill
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Wyoming Department of Education**



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Table of Contents

Message from the Chairperson	1, 2
About the Panel.....	3
Panel Functions	4
Panel Member Contributions.....	5
Conferences & Trainings	6
Mission, Vision, Teamwork	7
Key Activities/Advice	8
Panel Members	9, 10
Additional Information	11



Message from the Chairperson

Hello all!

I always find writing these letters for the annual report rather daunting. What can I say that might intrigue you? Will you use this opening statement as late night reading to cure your insomnia? Well - onward into the void shall we? In my letter for annual report last year I talked a great deal about change. This year I'm pleased to say that I can expand on what changes were made and what continues.

As I looked out over the Panel during the last meeting I realized how I have learned from the Panel since I came on board five years ago. The Panel continues to grow especially in adding another student and more parent representation (though this is an area we can continue to grow in!). We have quirky personalities that range from the serious to the delightfully comic. These personalities have collided to make a strong year for the group.

So what have we accomplished this year? One goal we started on was - how do we reach more legislators? Every year for the five I have served we sent invitations to the legislators to come join us at our Cheyenne meeting during the legislative session. The thought process was "They are all here. It will be easy for them to attend." Not so - the reality is legislators have a very busy time during session. They attempt to go out and meet with all sorts of groups during that time - but lunch (especially when they can work through it at times) was not working. So what I asked myself was - how can we do this? Then it came like a flash - the old proverbial bringing the mountain to Mohammad move. We loaded up our cars and went and watched the legislators on their home ground. We were introduced in both the House and the Senate. This was a first for many Panel members who had never seen a legislative session and if you have never had a chance to go - I'd recommend it.

We did speak one-on-one to several legislators as we had meetings in their communities. For their time we do thank them and hope that it is a start of a good friendship. We'll see how it grows. As a Panel we did send a letter of support for the Early Childhood Development Centers (CDCs) for the legislators in support of their programs and concern over the loss of funding.

We continued to make ourselves known by attending conferences and trainings. Through these contacts we let people know the who, what and why of our organization.

We had a guest speaker come to the group and talk about first hand experiences in special education that noted failure and pain as well as triumph and success. These revelations spurred us to keep looking for best practices and a desire to change dated thought processes when it comes to working with students with disabilities. I tell you I would be a rich person if I had a dollar for every time I talked to a student (both in and out of special education) who said they were told they were stupid or dumb by education staff. Now - I don't think it was said outright, but kids know - they always do, when someone is tired of working with them or cannot look past what isn't working. They overhear conversations more than adults ever suspect. We all fail at something or another and that too is a learning process. The labels that we place on the students will often haunt them into adulthood.

I guess it is time to hop off my soapbox as I digress! So - what else have we been working at this year? Ah yes - one thing as a Panel we realized that wasn't working this year was repetition in action so we decided that it was time to put a strategic plan into place. This will be in place by this coming fall and even though we all felt it was somewhat of a daunting task - it is one that can be - and must be done.

The panel itself has molded into a group of people who desire to make a change. It is not that we have nothing to talk about but more to the fact that once we get going, cannot seem to wrap up in a short order! These ideas keep the group moving forward and avoids stagnation.

It is always difficult to step down from a post that you have worked on for over a year, but it is that time. A new Chairperson, Lori Morrow will have taken over the job as leader of the WAPSD by the time you read this annual report. I look forward to serving on the Panel as just a member and continue watching it grow.

Shannon Buller, Chairperson
Wyoming Advisory Panel for
Students with Disabilities

About the Panel

The purpose of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities (WAPSD) is to advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in ways that promote services for children and youth with disabilities. The Wyoming Advisory Panel exists under the authority of the Code of Federal Regulations. The Panel shall serve as a forum by which issues and benefits regarding current and potential services to individuals with disabilities may be discussed by consumer, public, private, professional, and lay interests.

In order to promote issues that will help facilitate services for students with disabilities, the panel identifies barriers and provides advice related to the provision of quality educational services. The panel receives public comment; provides comments on special education rules and regulations; sets priorities; and engages in a variety of educational and public awareness activities around the state.

The panel is effective because of the diversity of members and the passion the members bring to each issue. There continues to be improvement in commitment, desire to serve, enthusiasm and participation in panel work and action. One of the most significant contributions each panel member brings to the panel is his/her representation of a specific constituency.



Panel Functions

A critical component that contributes to the success of the panel is ongoing implementation of the panel functions as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004, including:

- Advise the State Education Agency (SEA) of un-met needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities.
- Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities.
- Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under Section 618 of the Act.
- Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act.
- Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.
- Advise on services to eligible students with disabilities in adult prisons. The advisory panel shall also advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted and incarcerated in adult prisons.
- Review any final due process hearing findings and decisions.

Panel Member Contributions

The following are just a few contributions from individual panel members during the 2013-2014 school years:

Professional Memberships/Group Affiliations:

- Wyoming Association of Special Education Administrators (WASEA), Executive Board
- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)
- Division for Early Childhood (DEC)
- Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council
- Child Developmental Services of Wyoming
National Board of Directors - Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Early Intervention Council (EIC)
- WIND Advisory Council/COP-T
- LRE Community of Practice on National Level (OSEP)
- Society for Disability Studies
- National Women's Studies Association
- American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)*
- Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor
- Correctional Education Association Executive Board Member
- **Member, Wyoming Criminal Justice Association**
- PTSB Member
- Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- **Division for Early Childhood (DEC)**

Conferences/Trainings Attended

- OSEP Leadership Conference 2013
- Wyoming School Improvement Spring & Fall
- WASEA Fall & Spring
- Wyoming School Psychologist Conference
- Secondary Schools Principals Annual Conference
- WGCDD-MEGA Conference
- National Disability Policy Seminar
- AHEAD Conference Development
- Parent Information Center (PIC) Conference
- CEA National Conference
- CEA Leadership Forum
- NIC/CEA GED train the Trainer
- TSI-Thinking Strategies Institute
- LRP Conference-Special Education Law
- Wyoming Leadership Conference 2013
- WGCDD Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)
- Law Review Conference,
- The Best Go West Training on Employing People with Developmental Disabilities
- Wyoming Employability Training
- Help Me Grow Panel
- WDE Monitoring Taskforce
- DaSy/ECTA Conference
- Understanding Adolescence - Seeing Youth Through a Developmental Lens
- Rehabilitation Counseling at Utah State University
- Employment First Summit
- Mayor's Council for Individual's with Disabilities Employment FairSpEd Forms Training
- Perkins Trainings
- Consolidated Grant Trainings
- Wyoming Leadership Conference - Planned and Co-sponsored this conference in Lander, June of 2013.
- Facilitated the affiliation of WASEA with CASE. WASEA is a CASE Affiliated organization (in coordination with CEC)

Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities

Mission Statement

The mission of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities, as a diverse group, is to raise a common voice to advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the unmet needs of students with disabilities by advocating for and commenting on the improvement of educational opportunities.

Vision Statement

The vision of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities is to provide guidance on education policies for all students with disabilities that create opportunities for them to become compassionate, productive, and contributing citizens of their communities.

Advisory Panel Function

To Give Advice
To Inform
To Counsel
To Recommend
To Suggest
To Guide

The members of the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities work together as a team to help keep parents, educators, and administrators informed on the six principles of the law:

- Parent and student participation in decision making
- Procedural due process
- Appropriate evaluation
- Free appropriate public education (FAPE)
- Individual education program (IEP)
- Least restrictive environment (LRE)

Key Activities/Advice

2013-2014

- Guest Speakers: Senator Bill Landon from Natrona County; Dr. Kyle Scharles on transitioning to adulthood with disabilities.
- Wrote a letter given to the Wyoming State Legislature on the support of early childhood development in Wyoming. The Panel also attended the 2014 Legislative Session and was introduced to the body.
- The Panel presented and had a booth at: the fall and the Spring School Improvement Conference in Casper presented to the Parent Information Conference (PIC) Conference; and had a booth at the Wyoming Leadership Symposium in Riverton.
- Deputy Director Leighton Thomas spoke about the Vision of the Department of Education



**Panel Members
2013 - 2014**

Shannon Buller, Chairperson

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Cheyenne

Lori Morrow, Chair Elect

Early Childhood, Riverton

Betty Abbott

Adult Corrections, Cheyenne

Susan Abernathy

Local Education, Riverton

Brent Bacon

Local Education Official, Pine Bluffs

Andrea Clubb

Parent, Cheyenne

Donna J. Crandall

Person with a disability, Pine Bluffs

Brent Heuer

Parent, Casper

Joe Haney

Parent, Laramie

***Wendy Hewitt 2011-2014**

Parent, Mountain View

Tina Kirlin

Parent, Shoshoni

*** Tawny Love 2012 - 2014**

Person with a Disability, Laramie

Dan Mayer

Local Education Official, Evanston

Beth Rieger

Institutions Representative, Worland



Brianna Sands

Student with a Disability, Shoshoni

Diana Schafer 2011 - 2014

Foster Care, Cheyenne

Laurie Scharles

Parent, Cheyenne

Anedra Selley

Parent, Lander

Deborah Simon

Other Agency, Worland

Steve Wake

Institutions Representative, Worland

Rebecca Walk

Other Agency, Cheyenne

***Nita Werner 2012-2014**

Other, Douglas

Pam Zamora

Institutions, Laramie

*** Completed Services to the Panel**

Wyoming Department of Education

Tiffany Dobler, State Special Education Director

Kimberly Harper, Administrator of Learning

Barb Yates, Panel Secretary

Missy White, Panel Facilitator



Additional Information

For further information about the Wyoming Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities, please contact one of the following persons:

Shannon Buller, Chairperson

307-777-7332

E-mail, Shannon.buller@wyo.gov

Barb Yates, Panel Secretary

Phone: 307-857-9253

Email: barb.yates@wyo.gov

Panel Email - wapsdchair@gmail.com

Panel Website: www.edu.wyoming.gov/Programs/special_education/wapsd.aspx

Wyoming Department of Education
Special Programs Division
320 West Main
Riverton, WY 82501



What do the following people have in common?

Albert Einstein

Alexander Graham Bell

Cher

David Blunkett

Thomas Edison

Franklin D. Roosevelt

George Washington

Helen Keller

Ludwig van Beethoven

Robin Williams

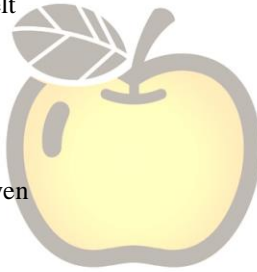
Stephen Hawking

Tom Cruise

Walt Disney

Woodrow Wilson

Sarah Bernhardt



They are all famous people with a disability!